



# **Aerospace Industry Vital to Alabama**

**Lieutenant Governor Jim Folsom, Jr.**

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Alabama has a rich history in aerospace, aviation and defense. Typically, the term Aerospace is used to refer to the industries that research, design, manufacture, operate, and maintain vehicles moving through air and space.

My office recently participated in the annual meeting of the Alabama Aerospace Industry Association in Mobile. The conference was a showcase of the positive statewide impact this industry is having in Alabama.

People around the country are recognizing the great value Aerospace adds to Alabama and the role we have played in the industry. I have been honored to serve as National Vice Chairman of the Aerospace States Association, a national organization focused on the promotion of Aerospace and Aerospace-related issues. It gives me great pride to represent Alabama Aerospace on this national committee comprised of Lieutenant Governors and their representatives from across the country.

According to the Alabama Aerospace Industry Association, many major milestones in the history of manned flight have a direct link to Alabama.

In 1910, the Wright brothers established the first civilian flying school in Montgomery. Forty years later, Dr. Werner Von Braun's team of German scientists arrived in Huntsville and developed the Saturn V Rocket that in 1969 sent man to the

moon. In 1984, the first Army Apache helicopter arrived at Fort Rucker near Dothan expanding the Army's helicopter training mission there. In 1990, Marshall Space Flight Center space scientists deployed the Hubble Space Telescope. And in 1998, the largest rocket factory in the world was built in Decatur by Boeing who later joined forces with Lockheed Martin to become *The United Launch Alliance*. In more recent developments, the U.S. Army is relocating headquarters for the Army Materiel Command, Space & Missile Defense Command, and Security Assistance Command to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville.

Alabama's aerospace industry - directly and indirectly - employs more than 150,000 people with a payroll of \$6.16 billion. But, while most people think of Huntsville when they think of Aerospace, the industry's impact and growth continues statewide. Nearly one third of Alabama's 67 counties have 100 or more Aerospace-related jobs.

Continuing the growth in Alabama Aerospace means good jobs for our people. Companies in the field are actively seeking all the skilled labor they can find. Our job training programs are actively working with Aerospace companies and their representatives to customize training models to meet the demand for workers.

Over 300 Aerospace companies call Alabama home and it is in our best interest to embrace this industry – trumpet its successes and nurture its growth – as we continue to show the world that Alabama is Aerospace.

For more information on the Alabama Aerospace Industry, you can visit the website of the Alabama Aerospace Industries Association at [www.alabamaaerospace.org](http://www.alabamaaerospace.org), or call my office at (334) 242-7900.

*In other news from your State Capitol:*

- There are rumblings that Governor Riley may call a special session of the legislature in mid-July to deal with economic incentives for a possible Volkswagen plant in North Alabama. This would be a tremendous economic

boost for this area and we are optimistic that yet another automotive manufacturer will select Alabama for a new home.

- I personally feel that a priority for any special session should be to address removing the state sales tax from groceries. Projections are that at least 80% of Alabama families will benefit from such a move, and it simply makes all the sense in the world to do it. It is important to note that Alabama is one of only two states that do not provide some relief from sales taxes on groceries.
- We should all be very proud that Lynn Carter, owner of Southeast Cherokee Construction in Wetumpka has been named U.S. Small Business Person of the Year. Lynn started the company in 1983, growing it from 12 employees to its current level of 75.

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